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ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

STEPHEN JARED COREY*

The premier characteristic of the great reformer and leader was his stand for individual freedom to think, interpret and act. The following quotations from him are a striking commentary on his liberty in the age of illiberal dogmatism, of which he was contemoprary. These statements are all the more striking when it is remembered that most of them were uttered more than one hundred years ago.

I. LIBERTY TO THINK AND ACT

"Truth has nothing to fear from investigation. It dreads not the light of science, nor shuns the scrutiny of the prying inquiry. It challenges the fullest, the ablest, and the boldest examination."

"Freedom of thought and freedom of action, within the prescribed area of rational and responsible beings, are the zenith of all aspirations of the human heart"....[1] "There is nothing more congenial to civil liberty than to enjoy unrestrained, unembargoed liberty of exercising the conscience fully upon all subjects respecting religion."[2]

"The Christian Church is the only perfect cradle of human liberty, as it is the only proper school of equal rights and immunities on earth. It commands every man to think, speak, and act for himself."[3]

"It is not possible, or in other words, it is not in human nature, to love liberty, freedom of thought, of speech and of action, in the state, and to hate it in the church... The love of liberty is a law or principle as uniform and immutable as the law of gravity."[4]

II. LIBERTY TO INTERPRET INDEPENDENTLY

"Some are so wedded to the common version (King James) that the very defects in it have become sacred; and any effort however well intended, to put the in possession of one incomparably superior in propriety, perspicuity, and elegance, is viewed very much in the light of making 'a new Bible', or of 'altering and amending the very word of God.' "[5]

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"Nothing will be found to have conduced more to subvert the dominion of metaphysical theology of the schoolmen, with all its interminable questions, cobweb distinctions, than that to which the modern translations have not a little contributed."(6)

"Here then, we have the essential elements of mental slavery and degradation: for, if no person *dare* to interpret the Scriptures contrary to what the church has already held, or to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, where is that liberty of thought and speech and action, on the most important of all subjects, our moral and religious relations, without which, liberty is without meaning, and mental independence but a name!"(7)

"God has spoken by men, for men. The language of the Bible is, then, *human* language. It is therefore, to be examined by the same rules which are applicable to the language of any other book, and to be understood according to the true and proper meaning of the words, in their current acceptation, at the time and in the places in which they were originally written, and translated."(8)

"We will take *the book* (Bible) and examine what is written there, by the same *criteria* which we would apply in analysis of the writings of Cicero, of Demosthenes, of Sallust, or of Xenophon."(9)

"We claim no favors, we ask no peculiar process, no new or untried form of examination. We will constitute no new court of inquiry. We will submit the question of authorship to be tried by all the canons, or regulations, or rules, which the literary world, which the most rigid critics have instituted, or appealed to, in settling any literary question of this sort."(10)

About the idea of God repenting, Mr. Campbell says; "a figurative expression is never to be subject to a literal interpretation. Now that God could repent at all, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, is out of the question altogether, if for us no other reason than this; because he could not do wrong. Hence we reject entirely the literal import of the word. The expression is a figurative one."(11)

"The progress in Bible-translating, in Biblical criticism, in liberal principles, in the free discussion of all questions concerning state and church polity, has, more or less, broken the spell of human authority, roused the long-latent energies of the

human mind, and begotten and cherished a spirit of inquiry before which truth and virtue alone can stand erect."[12]

"I do not believe, then, that the book commonly called the Bible is properly denominated a Divine revelation, or a communication from the Deity to the human race. At the same time I am convinced that in this volume there are revelations of or communications from the Deity to man... The history of the bondage in Egypt, of their pilgrimage thro' the wilderness, of their possession of the land of Canaan, of their judges and kings, is no more than true and faithful history, from the perusal of which the divine character and human character is developed to the mind of the reader."[13] "This is as true of the apostolic writings as of the ancient Jewish prophets. In the five historical books of the New Covenant, or Testament, many thousand items are written which are no Divine revelation; such as reasoning, objections and discourses of the Jewish priests, pharisees, and sadducees."[14]

"For now it is usual to call the whole Bible a revelation from God, I must explain myself here. There are a thousand historic facts narrated in the Bible which it would be absurd to regard as immediate and direct *revelation* from the Almighty.

"That the Bible contains a revelation from God is susceptible of every variety and degree of evidence which guides men in the affairs of life."[15]

III. Liberty to Make New Discoveries, to Grow and to Change One's Convictions

"We live in the midst of a great moral revolution. Opinions held sacred by our fathers, usages consecrated by the devotion of ages, institutions venerated by the most venerable of mankind, are now subjected to the same cold, rigid analysis, and made to pass thro' the same unsparing ordeal, to which the most antiquated errors and the most baseless hypotheses of the most reckless innovaters are not so unmercifully doomed."[16]

"The doctrines of our forefathers have been constituted in practical life, the rules of our faith... Once more we ask, who would not labor to redeem society from such mental servitude? Who can suppose that he has too much to sacrifice, to bring men back to God, and to induce them to think for themselves, as if they had a mind and conscience of their own?"[17]

"If it be a crime to change our views and our practice in

religious concerns, we must certainly plead guilty. If it be a humiliating thing to say we have been wrong in our belief and practice, we must abuse ourselves so far."[18]

"Who can arrest the progress of free inquiry? What human spirit can ride upon the whirlwind and direct the storm? What philosopher, or sage can, with effect, say, 'hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther; and here shall your investigation cease?' "[19]

"Criticism is a kind of torch, that lights us and conducts us, in the obscure tracts of antiquity, by making us able to distinguish truth from falsehood, history from fable and antiquity from novelty."[20]

"The weak minded only are afraid of new translations, or at most, those who have not touched upon the subject... Improved translations do not introduce any new articles of belief; but they have their value and importance from the plainness, force, beauty, and simplicity in which they present the testimony of God to the reader."[21]

"Our whole phraseology on religious topics is affected by the antiquated style of the common (King James) version. Hence we have been constrained to adopt a name for this style, to distinguish it from the good style of our mother tongue. The old fashioned style we call the *sacred style;* yet this *sacred style* was the *common style* in the reign of James."[22]

"Living language is continually changing. Like the fashions and customs in apparel, words and phrases at one time current and fashionable, in the lapse of time become awkward and obsolete. But this is not all. Many of them in a century or two have a signification very different from that which was once attached to them."[23]

"Passages of Scripture will, translated into any one language in one age, cease to be a correct and intelligible translation to the people of another age... The common version was gotten up some two and a half centuries since, under prelatical, hierarchical and royal patronage and restrictions. The vernacular of that day, spoken and written, was, in orthography, punctuation and in much of its common wording, quite different from the present day. The knowledge of the original tongues then possessed, was proportionately more than two centuries behind that of the present day, and their general literature and science were still more deficient."[24]

"The common version was made when religious controversy was at its zenith; and that the tenets of the translators, whether designedly, or undesignedly, did, on many occasions, give a wrong turn to words and sentences bearing upon their favorite dogma."(25)

"And that the King James version needs a revision is just as plain to the learned and biblical student, as that Scotch and English used in the sixteenth century is not the language now spoken in the United States."(26)

"Who that has his eyes open has not seen that men of the lowest moral endowments are the most zealous in the cause of *orthodoxy?* And that the reason is they are conscious that unless they can raise a clamor about orthodoxy they are likely to pass off the stage as they ought? I have always found those of the most orthodox scent the slowest in the race, and the loudest in the sound."(27)

"The people everywhere have an insatiable appetite for sound doctrine, and eat whole sermons, and run after this and that preacher for sound doctrine, and are as hungry as before... It would be of infinite more importance to the religious community and to the rising generation, if from the teachers chair, in the church, and in every Christian family, less was said about this sound doctrine, and the time occupied therein devoted to recommending, enforcing and practicing that 'holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."(28)

NOTES—

"Alexander Campbell and Christian Liberty," by James Egbert published by The Christian Board of Publication, has been used as a source in locating the above quotations. Where quotations from Alexander Campbell may be found—references:

(1) Christian Baptist, p. 409.
(2) Christian Baptist, p. 409.
(3) Christian Baptist, p. 110.
(4) Addresses, p. 171.
(5) Living Oracles, p. 12.
(6) Ibid.
(7) Christian Baptist, p. 233.
(8) Living Oracles, p. 16.
(9) Christian Evidences, p. 190.
(10) Ibid, p. 267.
(11) Lecture on Pentateuch, p. 156.
(12) Christian Baptist, p. 344f
(13) Ibid.
(14) Evidences, p 146f
(15) Christian Baptist, p. 36.
(16) Addresses, p. 311.
(17) Christian Baptist, p. 201.
(18) Christian Baptist, p. 143.
(19) Addresses, p. 454.
(20) Debate on R. C. Religion, p. 118.
(21) Christian Baptist, p. 326.
(22) Reonstruction in Theology, p. 76.
(23) Living Oracles, p. 3.
(24) Addresses, p. 613f.
(25) Living Oracles, p. 7.
(26) Christian Baptist, p. 540
(27) Christian Baptist, p. 275.
(28) Christian Baptist, p. 198f.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

CHAS. LYNN PYATT*

Increasingly the American Association of Theological Schools is coming into prominence. References to it and phases of its work occur frequently in religious journals and also rather frequently in the daily press. Army and Navy officials have frequently called the representatives of the Association into conference regarding problems relating to the religious interests of our country, to the chaplaincy and such problems as deferment of theological students.

Nevertheless, there is still a great need for knowledge and understanding about the work of this Association, both the things which it tries to do and the things that it does not attempt to do.

Affirmatively, it may be said that the Association seeks to do two things; first, to agree upon and cooperate in promoting the right types and standards of ministerial education, in other words, to give honest values and do honest work; second, to confer and cooperate in dealing with problems common to institutions attempting to make contributions in this field. Negatively, it may be said that it does not interfere with the autonomy of any institution, that it does not promote nor seek to promote any particular point of view, but that it allows great liberty and diversity in the detailed work of each school.

In 1917, during days which are in many respects so similar to those of the present crisis, President Lowell of Harvard issued a call for a conference to be held at the Harvard Divinity School regarding the problems facing the ministry and the training of ministers. The discussion seemed to be so worth while and of such value that those who were attending the meeting decided that a permanent organization should be formed. The result was an organization with the long title of "The Conference of Theological Seminaries and Colleges in the United States and Canada." It was agreed that meetings should be held biennially. However, one or two special meetings have also been held since then.

As these conferences were held, the value of the interchange of ideas and of cooperative effort came to be more and more appreciated by those who were actually engaged in the work. It

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was found that there were many problems which could not be treated by the Association, but it was found that there were countless problems which could be treated better in a cooperative than in an individualistic fashion. It was also discovered that there was inspiration and strength from the give and take of the ideas in these meetings.

The 1920's were days when men began to face seriously the problem of what should be done to produce ministers who could lead the churches of the United States. President Riley B. Montgomery, Lynchburg College, then a candidate for the Ph. D. at Yale, worked on his Doctor's thesis and produced a book on *The Education of Disciple Ministers.* This was a pioneer attempt in the field, though Robert Lincoln Kelley had produced a book sometime before that but without the basis of investigation which characterized Mr. Montgomery's book.

In harmony with the increased interest which was indicated and in part generated by Dr. Montgomery's book, it was finally made possible for the Institute of Social and Religious Research with the Conference of Theological Seminaries and Colleges in the United States and Canada to promote a very extensive and thorough investigation of the education of American Protestant ministers. Some, though not all, of the results were finally published in a four volume work entitled, *The Education of American Ministers.* Many men will testify that the more they study that series the more they are impressed by its thoroughness and value. Not only were the schools themselves thoroughly studied, but correspondence and interviews with thousands of ministers were carried on as well as similar investigations with men in other fields of work. Countless detailed studies were made because it was thought they would throw light on the problems of ministerial education in America.

After the survey was made groups were brought together to study the material and digest its meaning. Several things stood out.

First of all, the seminaries were working hard. They were sincere and earnest with no thought of there being a scandalous condition, but they became aware that the product of these seminaries, the fully trained ministers, were succeeding somewhat better than others by all standards of success. Nevertheless, they discovered that theological education was under a cloud in five prticulars. First, the grades of these institutions. They operating at different educational levels. Only one in five re-

quired as much as an A. B. degree for entrance, so there were few graduate institutions. Second, the intake. Non-college graduates made up about fifty per cent of the student body. There was an uncertain type of preparation for the work they were to do. No recognized areas of study were thought necessary. There was no guidance given to prospective students. There was no homogeneity within classes. This was not at all comparable to what was being done in law, medicine, and the teaching professions. It seemed imperative that they had to start work on the prospective minister farther back in his educational career. And, the personnel of the student body was on the whole quite insipid. Many were not getting men of high intelligence. These students did not have the daring to plunge out into new areas of thought. They were rather seeking safety. Students tended to float from one school to another and were being admitted to these other schools. It was very clear that the seminaries were not pulling together. Third, the curricula. And in this there was chaos. There was not even a semblance of uniformity which in a sense was healthy in that it made a study of the curriculum an easier point of approach. But there was so much blind imitation, seminaries adding, bit by bit, that which had been reported as successful in other seminaries.

Fourth, graduation. There were seventeen different degrees being offered to recognize the work done in these institutions. It was simply impossible to recognize what was meant by the conferring of any degree. And fifth, the church. In the churches, the condition was depressing. Only about one-fourth of the ministers had the full ministerial equipment of an A. B. plus a three year B. D. course.

There are some six problems that have been isolated. Real progress has been made on each one but we look to the future for their solution.

First, recruiting suitable men. Here we have not achieved an adequate strategy. We do not know just how it is to be done but we do know that heretofore the ministry has not been getting its full share of first rate men and this is not a comforting thought. How we are to meet this situation no one knows but it must be a statesmanlike policy.

Second, scholarship aid and student subsidies. Ministerial students are proverbially in a chronic state of "bustedness." Just how to meet the requirements of living conditions and give

students the means for adequate training without at the same time making parasites out of them is making the committee rack its brains, though remarkable progress has already been made.

Third, the demands for an educated ministry. This constitutes the whole problem of raising the church's conceptions of what a minister must be and do. It is a challenge to our churches to make a demand for men of calibre and training. Here also some wholesome gains are being made.

Fourth, moral ideals for seminary, minister, and churches. At this point there has been so much laxity that seminaries had professed not to take certain types of students and then opened the back door and let them in. Ministers have laid claim to degrees they do not possess, and churches have learned a lot of tricky ways during the period of depression. Our fundamental religious righteousness must become real in this area of life.

Fifth, question of ordination. This problem has always been with us who are democratically organized and it has not yet been solved. However, we might classify the denominations by their methods of ordination and find some illuminating things. Among those bodies which ordain by local congregations, only twenty-five per cent were fully trained ministers. Those ordained by a bishop register thirty-five per cent fully trained. While those who ordain by representatives such as synods and sessions register sixty-eight per cent fully trained.

Sixth, extension work. Inasmuch as about seventy-five per cent of our ministry now in the field of service are unprepared educationally for their task it seems that one of two things must be undertaken and that speedily, either by extension courses or institutes or conferences for these underprivileged men or develop a new generation of trained preachers which will crowd the unprepared out of the field.

This investigation and other forces did, however, reveal two things. One was the need of some definite efforts and second was the revelation of many possibilities. As a result, there was established in 1934 a Commission on Accrediting. This Commission reported in 1936, and at the same time it was believed wise to change the name of the Association from the older, longer, but very descriptive term to a shorter one, namely, "The American Association of Theological Schools." Few, if any, have ever argued that the new name is entirely appropriate. On the other hand, it seemed to meet with fewer ob-

jections from the members of the Association than any other one which was proposed.

The Committee on Accreditation not only had the results of the investigation to help guide them, but they also conducted a very widespread correspondence and investigation regarding the items that should be considered in accreditation. At the meeting of 1936, their recommendations were thoroughly discussed and finally a report embodying such details was unanimously, even enthusiastically, adopted.

The work of accreditation then continued, and after two years work the first list of accredited institutions was announced at the meeting of 1938. In educational circles this work has steadily come to have more and more appreciation, even admiration, extended to it.*

The standards of accrediting include such items as administration, entrance requirements and graduation, fields of study, faculty, library, equipment, finances and general tone. While the investigations are thoroughgoing and detailed, I do not think that anyone has ever spoken of them as mechanical or legalistic. Generally speaking, the reactions to the ideals embodied and to their administration have been commendatory.

The work of the Association from the first has been characterized by the finest spirit of cooperation and fellowship. Probably in no other similar enterprise has the organization been so thoroughly the expression of the will of its members. It can truthfully be said that no institution is a tail or part of the tail of the Association kite. Rather, the Association is a priceless instrument of service and of cooperation. It is not the dominant factor. The Association itself is the servant rather than the master of its members and accredited institutions. There is a remarkably happy and satisfied spirit prevailing among its members.

There has been a remarkable development of the conviction that in this day and age, and especially as one faces the future, the Protestant minister must be thoroughly trained. That training is regarded as containing necessarily a good course in a college of liberal arts followed by at least three years of training

*Most professional schools are outside the realm of accreditation by the general accrediting agencies. These organizations deal with "Colleges and Secondary Schools." It may not be superflous to point out that an "Accredited University" may have a school or schools which are not accredited by the group dealing with that type of "college." For instance, a University with Class A rating may have an engineering college which is not accredited by the agency dealing with that group of institutions. The situation prevailing among Medical Colleges and Seminaries is similar to this.

in a school known generally in America as a theological school or a theological seminary, though the names vary tremendously. It might be stated that there is considerable discussion about the desirability of lengthening this course from four years in college and three years in ministerial training school to four years in college and four years in professional school.

It is hard to say which of several groups is most thoroughly convinced of this ideal. Certainly students who are preparing for the ministry are desirous of obtaining this training. In fact, perhaps the great pressure is to be found just there. Those who have graduated and gone out in the ministry and had a number of years experience are almost unanimous also in demanding that these high standards be met. More and more it is the opinion of the men actually engaged in the training of ministers, an opinion, be it noted, that is based upon experience and observation, as well as investigation and theory.

The emphasis upon more thorough training for the ministry has received great publicity through the emphasis of the Commission of Chaplains for both the Navy and the Army. When the expansion of the armed forces of the United States began the effort was made by the Army and Navy to make adequate preparation for ministering to the religious needs of the men in service. Both branches of the service decided that the chaplains should possess as a minimum, three prerequisites: First, college training; second, seminary training; and third, three to five years successful experience in the pastorate.

Certainly there seems to be no sign that the men leading in this enterprise show any tendency to believe that those standards are too high. They seem thoroughly convinced that they are not, even though certain practical problems have forced the Army, but not the Navy, to lower these standards. At first there was a tendency to waive the requirement of the three years experience but insist on college and seminary training. At the present time, the tendency seems to be to insist upon college training and then demand either the three of seminary work or the three to five years of pastoral experience, but not both. This is cited simply as one illustration of the way in which higher training for the ministry is regarded as thoroughly desirable and necessary for the finest and highest type of Christian service in meeting the problems of our day and of the future.

What is the significance of this for the Disciples of Christ?

Answers will, of course, vary, but to the writer at least it seems that the work of the Disciples of Christ and the American Association of Theological Schools fit one another in remarkable fashion.

First of all we must never allow ourselves to forget that the Disciples of Christ were born out of an educated background and have always emphasized its value. A remarkable article by Professor Hamlin of Atlantic Christian College published in a recent issue of "World Call" is testimony to that fact. It is true that rigid standards of education for their ministers are not demanded by some Christian churches. On the other hand, the traditions of the Disciples have always favored them, especially those who have come under the influence of Alexander Campbell. There has been a remarkable approach toward unanimity among all groups of the Disciples on the matter of having men trained for the ministry.

In harmony with the Disciple ideals of freedom, there have been great changes in what are regarded as the standards of adequate training for the ministry as the years have come and gone, and as situations have varied. Until 1865, the ideal generally seems to have been that a man should have a college training reinforced by practical instruction from those actually engaged in the work. This was astonishingly prevalent throughout the United States. It certainly was not attained, but it was a recognized ideal.

From 1865 to 1900, the general ideal seems to have been to emphasize practical training at the expense of the liberal arts education. This was the day in which the ministerial A. B. was emphasized among the Christian Churches. In many cases a degree was not conferred, but about four years of similar work was given. At The College of the Bible this was called the course leading to the English Diploma.

Since 1900 ,the general tendency has been to emphasize more thorough education. First, more and more emphasis was placed upon a thoroughgoing, sound liberal arts course and gradually the need was recognized among the Disciples as elsewhere for a more thorough training of its ministry. A sentiment in favor of this has become increasingly strong. The conviction is certainly growing that Disciples cannot properly transmit their contribution to the religious world without adequately trained leaders.

This work of accreditation also fits into the Disciple attitude thoroughly because of its freedom and individuality. While certain standards must be adopted, they are not interpreted mechanically. In countless problems, such as curriculum, I think no institution has ever had any trouble, nor has such a problem ever led to lack of accreditation by one of the members of the Association.

It might also be well to emphasize the fact that membership in the Association and accreditation by it are by no means synonymous.

Those who have persevered thus far might be interested in learning something of the items discussed at the biennial meeting.

The Association works very generally through Commissions. Therefore, the greater part of the business consisted of hearing these reports and then of rather lengthy discussions of them. Probably one reason for the length of the discussions may be found in the freedom and cooperative spirit of the Association itself.

At Rochester we had not only the report of the treasurer, the Executive Secretary and the Executive Committee, but there were also reports from committees dealing with clinical training, supervision of training, theological degrees, the extension of theological education, scholarship aid and student subsidies, recruiting, and Selective Service and the ministry. There were only three addresses and these, practically speaking, turned into conferences. There was the president's address, an address on Theological Education and Inter-faith Relation, and an address on the problems connected with the Selective Service by the representative of that branch of the service.

These may not seem inspiring to one from a distance, or one unacquainted with the problems of educating ministers. As a matter of fact, every one of these reports dealt with a live problem and frequently with a problem which has been somewhat of a thorn in the flesh to some schools at least over a period of many years. Those who hear and participate in these discussions are grateful for them because they feel that they are receiving practical help and also cooperation from others.

In addition to the biennial meeting of the Association, biennial conferences are held by five regional areas where general problems are discussed, but where there is also an opportunity to look more definitely at the problems which concern the schools of that area.

It would be of infinite value to the cause of the Kingdom of God if people would remember that these meetings are not simply meetings of a small group of men dealing with their own problems; rather, they are dealing with a subject in which every church and every Christian should be interested, namely, the proper preparation of young men for the Christian ministry. The details discussed are not remote or technical but rather vital and practical, and no one can predict how far the vast outreaches of this influence may go. I cannot resist the opinion that every sincere Christian should not only be interested but grateful that such a splendid group of Christian men is so seriously and honestly facing these matters of such tremendous importance for the cause of Jesus Christ.

RECONSTRUCTION IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

FRANK N. GARDNER*

In times of swiftly moving surface events such as ours, when the attention of all of us is hypnotically focused upon scenes of action, it is easy to overlook tremendous and epoch making disturbances which are taking place in the deeper recesses of man's thought. Thus it is, that since ministers and theologians are of necessity tremendously concerned and pulled by the catastrophes and also by the opportunities of our present war, that one of the farthest reaching revolutions in philosophy of religion and theology has been taking place almost without notice by ministers and by not a few teachers of religion.

This movement in theology is the most important event in the history of Christian thought since the period of the formulation of the historic doctrine of the Trinity. Fundamentally, it is a new way of thinking about God. Therefore, it reaches the very core of Christian faith. The implications of this new reconstruction in theology are so vast and outreaching that even many of those who are aware of this new movement fail to see the radical revolution in Christian thought which must ensue because of the impact of this new movement upon our thinking.

I am quite sure that we are living not only in a devastating and terrible age, but also in one of those great creative epochs in the history of mankind. We are witnessing the birth of a new world, and if our ears are sensitive and if our hearts are understanding we can hear the birth cries and we can feel and share the pain. Indications of the birth of this new world are to be seen in every area of our human life, economics, politics, art, science, education and, in a very real sense, in religious life and thought. History has revealed that in such creative epochs in the past few people living during such periods have realized how creative their own age was. In all probability this is true of us. I am sure that we all feel that "now we see through a glass darkly." Perhaps it will be for our children's children to see us and our age with clearer eyes than we ourselves possess. But, even though we see but darkly, we ought to see what we can. Our eyes and our minds should desperately strive to see and understand for only the blind and the willfully stupid will be without light.

It is my purpose in this paper to set forth first the histor-

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ical background of the older construction of Christian theology which is still the dominant pattern in Christian thought. Then, I hope to show the deviation of historical theology from what was the dominant Hebrew-Christian idea of God, and finally I intend to indicate the new reconstruction of theology which is evolving, a reconstruction which is curiously related to the dominant Hebrew-Christian pattern. In addition, I hope to show some of the implications for the future of this radical movement as it affects our Christian faith and thought.

In my use of the term "the Hebrew-Christian idea of God" in this section of the paper, I wish it to be understood that I mean the dominant idea of God as it appears in the Bible. I do not mean the idea as it was fostered, magnified, altered, and "reworked" by the makers of the Creeds, later theologians, and philosophers even down to our own day. I am not unappreciative of the purposes of the "Fathers" nor of their efforts, but for purposes of clarification and understanding I wish to limit the meaning of the term as I have indicated.

The Hebrew-Christian Idea of God

Anyone who has even cursory knowledge of the Bible is well aware of the fact that there are many and diverse ideas of God which are portrayed therein. Those more familiar with the historical development of the literature and of the religious ideas of the Jewish people are able to discern a strain of thinking which arose out of the conflict of the ideology of the Hebrews with that of their "pagan" neighbors, which flowered in the ethical monotheism of the eighth century prophets, and culminated in the "Father" God of Jesus.

The idea of God which developed among the Hebrews was a product of their religious genius. It was not a product of speculation so much as a product of actual religious and ethical strivings. It was shaped and fused out of the very crucible of rigorous living among a people at constant odds with other nations and with their environment. It was a product of their peculiar mind which was far different from the mind of the Graeco-Roman world. Therefore, to understand this dominant idea of God which was the essential product of the Hebrew religious genius it is necessary to try to understand the Hebrew mind. This, I believe, is of the utmost importance.

In classical Hebrew there is no verb "to be" either as a

form of logic or as an expression of the idea of existence. This is not a sign of mental deficiency as many philosophers might suppose, but rather it is indicative of an entirely different type of mind and attitude in contrast to that of the Greek mind and our own. It is, I believe, a type of mind which is exceedingly hard for us to understand who have been reared in a culture which has verb forms of "to be" and surrounded as we are by mental structures of "Existence", "Being", etc., which are a part of our heritage from ancient Greece. Actually, it is practically impossible for us to get into the mental framework of a language such as the Hebrew and consequently to get the same "feel" that the Hebrew had in regard to himself and his relationship to God and the world. The mind of the Hebrew was formed in a context where the dominant assumption was of the world as Becoming rather than Being. Consequently, the Hebrew mind was dominated by such concepts as history, rather than those of Being, Existence, or Nature.

As practical men with that sort of mind the Hebrews observed change on every hand and took it for granted. Life, to the typical Hebrew, was always changing—growing; life was always in process of Becoming. As a result of this fundamental outlook, the Hebrews had a profound sense of the significance of history. Change not only took place, but it took place in time. Throughout the literature of the Bible, the "historical" mind of the Hebrew is indelibly impressed. Even in the opening verses of Genesis the earth is not created all at once by divnie fiat, rather, it takes place in time. Even this early folk story illustrates their typically characteristic way of looking at events with an historical mind. At the core of their thought as a people was similarly the concept of themselves as a people with a mission or a destiny, and in history they saw the workings out of that destiny.

It was, therefore, only natural for the Hebrews to look for God in history rather than in nature as did the Greeks. To the Hebrews, God was known by happenings, by events, by His works. He was a God seen as working out His purposes in history. Every happening to their nation they interpreted as an impact of the will and purpose of God. The note of the prophets is that since Israel has sinned and thus transgressed the purpose of God, certain events will follow. Later on in the development of their ethical monotheism they saw God at work not only in their own history but in the history of the world.

Now this Hebrew idea of change as taking place in time was a far different idea of change from that advanced by Heraclitus of Ephesus. For, to Heraclitus, all things changed in the sense that *A* becomes *B*, but *B* is entirely different from *A*. On the contrary, the Hebrew idea of change seems to be one in which there is continuity, that is, an identity which persists through change. Therefore, it was not an idea of change in which nothing resembled what had gone on before. For example, as we shall see later, God worked, God changed His mind, He did favors, He punished, etc., and yet, He was still the same Yahweh, their God. In a sense you might say that their notion of change was one of the reality and continuity of history.

As I have already indicated, the concept of God which was the product of the Hebrew genius was one of God as dynamic, working, desiring, and even being forced to make adjustments. In the Bible we find that God even recognized that some action of His might have been a mistake. He was a God thought of primarily as Becoming rather than as Being. And this Becoming took place in time and not outside it.

Illustrating this characteristic and fundamental point of view regarding God is the literature which contains Exodus 3:13-15. This is the passage where Yahweh answers the question of Moses as to whom he is. In folk-lore fashion the literature says,

> "See, I am going to the Sons of Israel and I shall say to them 'The God of your fathers hath sent me to you.' Then they will say to me, 'What is His name?' 'What shall I say to them?' And God said to Moses, 'I Become (Ehye) what I Become.' And he said, 'Thus shalt thou say to the Sons of Israel, 'I Become (Ehye) has sent me to you.' "

To my way of thinking, it is a tragedy that the Greek translation of the Hebrew perpetrated a change in meaning which has persisted in many English translations from the Greek. When the Greek-speaking Jew in Egypt translated the Hebrew verb he did so as if it were a Greek verb. And when early translations into English were made from the Greek translation of the earlier Hebrew the same change in meaning was carried through. Thus God is made to say to Moses, "I Am that I Am." While it is true that the English "to be" can also be used in the sense "to become" it is nevertheless true that "I Am that I Am"

carries an entirely different meaning from "I Become what I Become." Consequently the whole point of the Hebrew has been obscured through the process of translating a basic concept into a mind-context and language basically different from the Hebrew. Driver, in his *Introduction*, specifically calls attention to this fact and a number of other Old Testament scholars seem to be agreed upon this point.

From a total misunderstanding of the meaning of this passage, Etienne Gilson, in his *Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, endeavors to show that Exodus 3:14 is the foundation of the classic concept of God as framed in terms of Being. Quoting the passage, Gilson says that Moses got directly from God the nature of God, "I Am that I Am."

> "From this moment it is understood once and for all that the proper name of God is Being and that, according to the word of St. Ephrem taken up again later by St. Bonaventure, this name denotes His very essence of God, and the essence of no other being but God, is to say that in God essence and existence are identical." . . . "There is but one God and this God is Being, that is the corner-stone of all Christian philosophy, and it was not Plato, it was not even Aristotle, it was Moses who put it in position."[1] ?

This is a vigorous attempt to read into the Hebrew mind and language what is a thoroughly Greek idea.

This dynamic God of the Hebrews, this God who was constantly Becoming, was a God of power but He was also a God of mercy. He was a God of justice but in the highest development of the concept God was a God of a kind of justice which was peculiarly tempered with love. God was both "transcendant" and "holy" but He was also "immanent" and very near to man. God was a moral personality on a divine scale. He was the sovereign power of Israel. God was constant in character as He worked out His purposes in history. God treats man not as a puppet, but as a free being. We even read that God "woos Israel." In the thinking of the Hebrew people, God not only influences man *but man influences God.*

The Hebrews have been accused of making God too anthropomorphic. It is true that they thought of God in terms of personality but they did not think of God as just a "big man."

1. Gilson, Etienne, **The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy**, p. 51, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1936.

God was holy and to be approached with awe. His righteousness and love so far exceeds man's that it is almost as if He were other altogether. Too often we fail to see that while the Hebrew thought of God as very near, that at the same time he thought of God as far above himself in majesty and grandeur. But in all this, the Hebrew people still thought of God as in some sense "personal." Certainly God was not impersonal in character.

Jesus was an inheritor of this great tradition of his people. It seems to me that he selected the best ideas which his people had brought forth and emphasized these very forcefully. He took the ideas of God which the great eighth century prophets had worked out, a concept of ethical monotheism, the ideas of God as Father, and as love, and as universal, and made this conception of God as a loving, universal Father central in his thinking. He used the term Fatherhood in its highest meanings. To Jesus, God was not only a forgiving Father, but one who actually seeks out man. He seeks his erring children with a redemptive love. God is just and righteous, but His justice is determined by His love. God loves His children and freely gives His love to them, not according to their merit, but above and irrespective of their merit. God keeps on loving man, even when man spurns that love. God is constantly seeking to awaken love in the heart of man. God's love is wholly selfless. It is the most creative kind of love in the world.

Thus to Jesus, God was personal, dynamic, active, redemptive, even suffering. To Jesus, God was working out His purposes in the world and Jesus committed himself to a fellowship of co-working together with God. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

The Idea of God in Traditional Theology

The dispersal of the early Christians throughout the Mediterranean world and the dispersal of the Jews throughout that same world resulted in the mingling of the Hebrew-Christian tradition with the currents of thought which had with great vigor and power come from the highest point of Greek civilization. The tradition also interacted with the Mystery religions which were having quite a vogue in the Graeco-Roman culture. As a result of this interaction, a process of cross-fertilization took place. Greek thought was transformed, but more pertinent to our interest the Hebrew-Christian tradition was trans-

formed and the Greek intellectual motif became dominant in expressing the Christian faith rather than Hebrew thought forms. This perhaps was the only way by which Christianity could survive for it was an orphan religion in an alien culture. In order to try to express their faith in thought forms which would be meaningful to the Hellenistic world, the early Christians were forced to use Greek patterns of thought. As the Greeks and Romans of the Mediterranean world became Christian the Greek philosophical thought motif became increasingly dominant in the Christian tradition.

What happened because the Greeks were unable to understand the peculiar type of mind which the Hebrew religious genius had? The answer is one of the most interesting events of history.

The Greeks had conceived of God in terms of Being and had sought for God in nature. On the other hand, while in some minor ways the Hebrews may have sought for God in nature, predominantly they sought for God in history. When the Hebrew mind with its dominant concept of Becoming and the Greek idea of God as Being came into interaction, the Greek motif became dominant. The result of this interaction was to effect the thought of Christianity for nearly two thousand years. Whitehead says,

> "When the Western world accepted Christianity, Caesar conquered; and the received text of Western theology was edited by his lawyers. The code of Justinian and the thology of Justinian are two volumes expressing one movement of the human spirit. The brief Galilean vision of humility flickered through the ages, uncertainly. In the official formulation of the religion it has assumed the trivial form of the mere attribution to the Jews that they cherished a misconception about their Messiah. But the deeper idolatry, of the fashioning of God in the image of the Egyptian, Persian, and Roman imperial rulers, was retained. The Church gave unto God the attributes which belonged exclusively to Caesar."... "The notion of God as the 'unmoved mover' is derived from Aristotle, at least so far as Western thought is concerned. The notion of God as 'eminently real' is a favorite doctrine of Christian theology. The combination of the two into the doctrine of an aboriginal, eminently real, transcendant creator, at whose fiat the world came into being, and whose imposed will it

obeys, *is the fallacy which has infused tragedy* into the history of Christianity and of Mohametanism."[2]

The tragedy did not occur all at once. Rather it was a slow growth. The first slight modification is to be seen in Paul's thinking as revealed by his letters to early Christian groups. According to his letters, Paul thought of God in typical Jewish fashion as personal, as creator, as ruler, as righteous, as merciful, and as holy. But his letters also reveal that he thought of God in terms of a spiritual *substance* which could be shared by more than one. Therefore, Jesus and God, while they are two, yet share the same divine *nature*. Perhaps this is due to the effect of Stoicism upon Paul but it is also likely the result of his greatest concern in life, that of salvation.

Salvation, to Paul, was escape from the bondage of sin and death, which is man's heritage, by union with the divine spirit. The genesis of this doctrine of salvation is to be found in the dualism prevalent in the Hellenistic culture of his age and in the mystical redemption ideas which dominated the Mystery cults.

It seems as if Paul had two conceptions of God which, apparently, he never tried to reconcile. One conception came to him from his Jewish forbears. The other idea of God in terms of substance and mystical being was the result of his salvation experience tempered by the impact of the dualistic philosophy of the Hellenistic world.

Even as late as Tertullian the idea of God as personal was still the dominant strain in the tradition. Tertullian laid stress upon the idea of God as a personal sovereign. He did not think of God in terms of absolute Being, nor as a metaphysical principle, nor as the all-inclusive whole as many Neo-Platonic Christians were beginning to think. Nevertheless, in his doctrine of the Trinity, Tertullian used the concept of substance, a metaphysical idea which was altogether foreign to the Hebrew mind. It was not until later, however, that the impact of Greek philosophy and the use of it by theologians resulted in a definite molding of Christian thought into the Greek metaphysical framework. In Augustine the movement gained impetus and later on came to full flower in the thinking of Aquinas.

Augustine's conception of God was basically Neo-Platonic.

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2. Whitehead, Alfred North, **Process and Reality**, p. 519. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1930.

It is also true that Augustine thought of God in personal terms, or more particularly, in terms of will. This second aspect was conditioned by his conversion experience and his religious life. We might say of Augustine (as of other traditional theologians) that his religion was better than his theology. In a sense, Augustine had a dual conception of God. There were "two sides to his dollar." The one side was his thought of God as a person with whom he could commune, the God of his own religious experience. The other side, and by far the more dominant side intellectually, was his thought of God in terms of Neo-Platonism.

To Augustine, all Being is good; non-Being is evil. Evil is merely negative, it is absence or loss of good or Being. God therefore is the *only real Being*, for He is the absolutely unchangeable and hence at the farthest remove from non-existence. God is Himself reality and the only absolute reality. All else is temporary and changing and hence not truly real. In *De Trinitate*, Vol. 2 (3) he says,

> "Other things that are called essences or substances admit of accidents, whereby a change, whether great or of any size whatever, may be made in them. But to God nothing of this kind can happen. Therefore, He who is God is the only unchangeable substance or essence, to whom assuredly being itself, from which comes the word essence (esse), especially and most truly belongs. For what is changed does not preserve its being; and what can be changed, is able not to be what it was. Hence, that alone which not only is not changed, but cannot be changed, may without scruple be most truly said to be."

Since to Augustine God is both the only real and unchangeable, He is also eternal. God is "the only true and eternal substance."

> "For the difference between eternity and time is not a matter of duration; eternity is not mere endless time. Where there is time there is change. Where there is eternity there is change. Eternity thus belongs to a higher order of existence than time as God belongs to a higher order of existence than the world, for time was created when the world was made."

As God is the only real Being He is the only real good. Apart from Him there is no reality and hence apart from God there

is no good. There is no such a thing as independent goodness. Only as men and things are in God or He in them have they any existence.

Thus far we see that Augustine carried the development of Hellenizing the Christian faith farther than most prior thinkers in conceiving of God in terms of static Being. But it remained for Thomas Aquinas to mold systematically the structure of tarditional theology in its classic form. Thomas Aquinas dedicated himself to the task of making it possible for Christianity and the philosophy of Aristotle to live together. Prior to Aquinas the philosophy of Plato had been the thought which had been harmonized with Christianity. The purpose of Aquinas was to be commended in that he attempted to harmonize the Christian faith with the philosophy which he felt was to be the dominant philosophy of mankind. By this, I mean that he attempted to preserve the Christian faith intact and yet at the same time to make room for the methods and point of view of Aristotelianism. We can at least commend his intentions, although we may be critical as to his solution.

Aquinas combined Aristotle's epistemology and the Christian faith by drawing two sharp distinctions: the one between natural and revealed theology and the other between the conditions of knowledge in this life and in the next. To Aquinas, *Natural Theology* comprises all those truths concerning God and His relation to man and the world that may be deduced from sense experience. *A priori* reasoning and so-called innate ideas, he excluded. *Revealed Theology* comprises the truths about God and His relation to man and the world that are given by revelation. Though above reason such truths are not contrary to it, but their proof must be found wholly in revelation and the most that reason can do is to show that they are not irrational and that there is some probability in their favor.

In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas deals elaborately with Natural Theology. In Book One he undertakes to prove God's existence and to show what kind of a God, God is. He rejects Anselm's onthological argument because of his own Aristotelian empiricism and he also rejects the idea that the notion of God is inborn or that it is self-evident. Rather, Aquinas uses for his argument what might be called the cosmological argument from effect to cause. "Objects are not self moved but remain at rest unless moved from without, and an infinite regress from effect to cause is impossible." Hence, God becomes the

"unmoved mover" of Aristotle. All in all there are five ways in which Aquinas uses the argument of "casuality" to prove the existence of God. These are: 1. The argument from motion to unmoved-mover; 2. The argument from the nature of efficient cause; 3. The argument from the possible and the necessary; 4. The argument from "grades" of things; and 5. The argument from guidance (teleological argument).

Aquinas' concept of God might be summed up as follows: God is *eternal* for there is time only where there is change and the "unmoved-mover" therefore transcends time. God is also *necessary* and not contingent for contingency presupposes necessity; otherwise, we should have to consume an infinite regress from contingent to contingent. Being eternal and necessary, God has no admixture of potentiality as all other beings have, but is *pure actually*. This means that God is *simple* and not compound and is, therefore, *incorporeal*, for all corporeal things are compounded and divisible into parts. God is *one* for there cannot be two necessary and simple beings, for if there were they would be distinguished from each other only in case one of them had added to it some differentia which the other lacked; that is, only if one or both of them were composite, not simple.

God is *perfect* for imperfection implies potentiality. Being perfect, God is *good* since goodness is included in perfection; and being perfect, He is perfect goodness and therefore the supreme good.

As perfect and as pure actually with no admixture of potentiality, God is also *infinite*: infinite in goodness, power and essence. He is also *intelligent* for the intelligence in the world requires an intelligent author and infinite perfection includes intelligence. All things likewise are *eternally present* to God. There is for Him neither past nor future. Primarily God knows only Himself but in knowing Himself He knows all things, for He is the cause of all. God has no passions for He is incorporeal and is pure Being without any admixture of potentiality. Yet he knows happiness for happiness is the proper good of God as of every intelligent being. God is indeed *His own happiness. He is sufficient to Himself* and *in want of nothing.* Nothing can be added or withdrawn from Him for such would destroy His essence simultaneously with His perfection.

Since the days of Thomas Aquinas, his theology has shaped not only the thinking of the Roman Catholic Church but the thinking of orthodox Protestantism and in many and subtle ways

much of liberal Protestantism. Even in our day most theologians think of God as the immutable, unchangeable, perfect, infinite, necessary, pure simple. Some still think God as beyond space and time. They do say that God acts, but He does not act in time. It is a "pure" act. The ruling tradition in historical theology as well as philosophy has been the belief that fixity and unchangeableness are nobler qualities than change. God must therefore be unalterable.

Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* portrays the traditional theologian asserting this viewpoint as the true viewpoint of theism when Demea says,

> "New opinions, new passions, new affectations, new feelings arise, which continually diversify the mental scene, and produce in it the greatest variety, and most rapid succession imaginable. How is this compatible with that perfect immutability and simplicity, *which all true theists* ascribe to the Deity? By the same act, say they, He sees past, present, and future: His love and His hatred, His mercy and His justice are one individual operation: He is entire in every point of space; and complete in every instant of duration. No succession, no change, no acquisition, no diminution. What He is implies not in it any shadow of distinction or diversity. And what He is this moment, He has ever been, and ever will be, without any new judgment, sentiment or operation. He stands fixed in one simple, perfect state; nor can you ever say, with any propriety, that this act of His is different from that other, or that this judgment or idea has been lately formed, and will give place, by succession, to any different judgment or idea."[3]

Nowhere, I believe, is there a shorter description of the traditional construction of the concept of God in classical theology than this one which Hume has Demea present. Through Cleanthes, Hume says of such a theism,

> "A mind, whose acts and sentiments and ideas are not distinct and successive; one, that is wholly simple, and totally immutable; is a mind which has no thought, no reason, no will, no sentiment, no love, no hatred; or in a word, is no mind at all. In other words, those who hold such a concept 'are, in a word, atheists, without knowing it.' "[4]

3. Part IV.
4. Ibid.

In our day is is hard for some to imagine that the God of the great prophets of Israel and the God of Jesus needs to be distinguished from the God, say, of Anselm, Augustine or Aquinas, as described by these men speaking as philosophers. Because these men were sincerely religious, it is assumed that they could never have departed from the Christian idea of God. I am quite certain, however, that unconsciously they did so.

As Charles Hartshorne says in *Man's Vision of God*,

> "It is coming to be seen that the meaning which 'God' had for the prophets and their most sensitive followers is philosophically more defensible than the definitions of the term which (until recently and with conspicuous exceptions) were given by theological and philosophical technicians, even when they were also religious men. . . . Of late the partly irreligious character of the traditional theologico-philosophical concept of God has been recognized by a number of writers. What has still to be realized, I think, is the philosophical power inherent in the truly religious conception."[5]

Although the Christian faith speaks of "serving" God, in reality according to traditional theology one can do nothing for God, and our worst sins harm God as little as the finest acts of nobility can advance Him. Religious motivation is not altruistic desire to help God, says the traditional theologian, but solely individual or collective egoism of men, who serve themselves through God, but never God through their own achievements. Purpose would seem to imply a present lack of something desired, but God is perfect, says traditional theology, and hence for Him there is no contrast between present intent and future realization. Love involves sensitivity to the joys and sorrows of others, but we cannot infect God with our sufferings (since He is cause of everything and effect of nothing), and our joys can add nothing to the immutable perfection of God's happiness.

It seems to me that the course of Christian history reveals a gradual transformation of the Hebrews 'Jesus' concept of God as dynamic, changing, purposing, acting, working, caring, loving, suffering, persuading, brooding, and in some sense personal, to a concept of God defined in Greek metaphysical attributes. Here the concept of God is that He is static, unchangeable, perfect in all ways, does not need mankind in any way), infinite, eternal, necessary, cause, and beyond time and space. He came

5. Hartshorne, Charles, **Man's Vision of God**, p. VIII (Preface) Willett, Clark and Co., Chicago, 1941

to be thought of in terms of Being rather than in terms of Becoming. At last He has become a God almost diametrically opposed to the Hebrew-Jesus concept of God, which to me, as to many others, is certainly the God of religion, if not of theology. This is, as Whitehead has said, one of the world's greatest tragedies. It is astounding that for nearly two thousand years theologians have been "betting on the wrong horse."

However, I believe that at the present time there is a reconstruction in Christian thought which is taking place which should give us hope. It is a synthesis of the newer concepts of change, flux, and the persistence of identity in the midst of change which have been presented in recent years. In this new synthesis not only do the philosophical tenets logically support the religious but the religious support philosophical. This is a "two way" support never achieved by traditional theism.

The Idea of God in the New Reconstruction of Theology

While philosophers and theologians since the days of Kant and Hume have criticized traditional theology, it has not been until comparatively recent times that the Christian faith has been interpreted in an intellectual structure based primarily upon the concepts of change, activity, and identity throughout change, which are characteristic of the Hebrew mind.

Actually it was not until Bergson that theologians began to conceive of change in a new fashion. What was new in Bergson was not the idea of change, but an entirely different idea of change. Bergson held that there was continuity in change; that is, change involved duration. Change, he asserted, also involves the emergence of novelty when the change is of the type he calls creative evolution. Bergson steadily asserted that this process of change that is going on, with the appearance of that which is novel, is the reality of things. Duration determines the nature of time. Time is not simply the total of an indefinite number of isolated temporal units. Time is a process, and must be conceived as a process or its essential character is unrecognized. This new concept of the "reality of things" has profoundly influenced the new reconstruction in philosophy of religion and theology. The numerous theologians and philosophers working with this concept disagree vigorously at many points, but one and all they are directly influenced by this concept. Those working toward this new synthesis use terms describing God which Augustine, Aquinas, Anselm, Calvin, Luther and many present

theologians would abhor. A few such terms are "process", "change", "dynamic", and "flux".

Among those who are working toward this new synthesis in Christian thought are some of the most eminent philosophers and theologians of our day. Such, to name only a few, are Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, Henry Nelson Wieman, Robert L. Calhoun, Edgar Sheffield Brightman, et al. In as brief a manner as possible I will indicate by some of their writings the way in which they are using the new concepts, especially as such concepts affect their thinking of God.

Whitehead has repeatedly acknowledged his indebtedness to Bergson. In his thinking of God, Whitehead says in one instance,

> "The vicious separation of the flux from the permanent leads to the concept of an entirely static God, with eminent reality, in relation to an entirely fluent world, with deficient reality.". . . . "There is not the mere problem of fluency *and* permanence. There is the double problem: actuality with permanence, requiring fluency as its completion. The first half of the problem concerns the completion of God's primordial nature from the temporal world. The second half of the problem concerns the completion of each fluent actual occasion by its function of objective immortality, devoid of 'perpetual perishing,' that is to say, 'everlasting'."[6]

And again Whitehead says,

> "It is as true to say that God is permanent and the world fluent, as that the world is permanent and God is fluent. It is as true to say that God is one and the World many, as that the World is one and God many. It is as true to say that, in comparison with the World, God is actual eminently, as that in comparison with God, the World is actual eminently. It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World. It is as true to say that God transcends the World, as that the World transcends God. It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God. God and the World are the contrasted opposites in terms of which Creativity achieves its supreme task of transforming disjoined multiplicity, with its diversities in opposition, into concrescent unity, with its diversities in contrast. In each

6. **Process and Reality.** pp. 526-27.

> actuality these are two concrescent poles of realization —'enjoyment' and 'appetition', that is, the 'physical' and the 'conceptual'. For God the conceptual is prior to the physical, for the World the physical poles are prior to the conceptual poles."... "Neither God, nor the World, reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty. Either of them, God and the World, is the instrument of novelty for the other."[7]

Robert L. Calhoun's thinking is expressed well in *Christendom*, Volume I, No. 2, Winter, 1936,

> "We (Wieman and Calhoun) agree in affirming the existence of God as organizing power in the cosmos at large, beyond the limits of human history; power made manifest in such processes as those which issue in the emergent evolution of living things within a sustaining environment. We both recognize different levels of value in the actual world and see God at work through 'the activities of wind and sea and trees, and coal and machines, and much else of the choir of heaven and furniture of earth' toward realization of higher orders of value."[8]

The concept of God with which Henry Nelson Weiman has been working for some time is the concept of God as Creativity. He uses many terms to describe God such as *process, growth,* and *creative interaction,* but in all instances the terms used are *dynamic concepts.* To Wieman God is never static, never the "unmoved mover." God is the creative source of all meaning and value, says Wieman. God is thus dynamic and achieving. In the following issue of Christendom to that referred to above, Wieman says,

> "The presence of God... is identical with the work of God. We know a reality by the way it works. The reality is its working. The two cannot be separated. The work of God is the growth of organic connections, that is, the growth of all meaning and value."[9]

Charles H. Hartshorne in his most recent book, *Man's Vision of God,* elsewhere referred to in this paper, deals with the concept of love in terms of a metaphysical structure for the re-

7. Ibid, pp. 528-29.
8. Christendom, Vol. I, No. 2, Winter, 1936. Article, **God Is More Than Mind,** p. 334.
9. Christendom, Vol. I, No. 3, Spring, 1936. Article, **God is More Than We Can Think,** p. 440.

ligious idea of God. It is a very vigorous attempt at a reconstruction of the Christian concept of God. Discussing the moral and intellectual debility of traditional theology he says,

> "Is it not precisely first-type theism, traditional theology, which is one-sided, meager, incomplete in its use of experience to arrive at the nature of God? It simply denies certain all-persuasive, infinitely fundamental aspects of life,—change, variety, complexity, receptivity, sympathy, suffering, memory, anticipation,—as relevant to the idea of God... The Absolute is not only an invitation to a moral holiday, as James said; it is likewise, as he also, though less clearly, saw, an invitation to an intellectual holiday, to irresponsibility in regard to every ideal whether of goodness of conduct or of goodness of thought."[10]

Perhaps he had in mind what Whitehead says,

> "There is, however, in the Galilean origin of Christianity yet another suggestion which does not fit in very well with any of the three main strands of thought. It does not emphasize the ruling Caesar, or the ruthless moralist, or the unmoved mover. It dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love; and it finds purpose in the present immediacy of a kingdom not of this world. Love neither rules, nor is it unmoved; also, it is a little oblivious as to morals. It does not look to the future; for it finds its own reward in the immediate present."[11]

Brightman for his part asserts,

> "God is commonly thought of as the Eternal. Nevertheless, the religious idea of the Eternal is not that of an utterly timeless being. The "Being" of Parmenides, the Platonic "Ideas," Aristotle's "Pure Form," the "One" of Plotinus, Spinoza's "Substance," Kant's "Dinge an sich," Hegel's "Absolute" (taken in one of its aspects), the formulas of mathematics, logic, and even of physics,—these are all timeless validities of some sort, based on abstractions from temporeal experience; but in no case are they the God of religion, and in no case are they reality. The thesis of the present paper is that the God of religion, from everlasting to everlasting, is a temporal being. Indeed it may be said that all reality, all experience, whether human or divine, is a temporally moving present. Activity, change, dur-

10. Ibid.
11. Process and Reality, pp. 520-1.

> ation, are the essence of the real. The real endures, the real changes, the real grows. God is the real, or at least the most significant part of the real. . . God is not an abstraction, but a concrete living reality. As such He has traits which have been called by many names: energy, creative process, elan vital, concentration, integration, will. God is not a timeless being; he is an ever enduring creator. His existence is an eternally changing present.". . . "An important field of evidence for the divine is history. If the ongoing of history reveals God, it reveals one for whom events happen and to whom the order of events is of real importance.". . ."Within the boundless time of His existence He doubtless begins and brings to consummation many plans, of which our entire physical universe may be only a trivial one.". . ."God is a God of many universes and of many evolutions."[12]

It seems to me very evident that such theologians and philosophers are talking in terms which, basically, the Hebrew mind would find congenial. It is around such ideas that the new reconstruction in theology is taking place.

I am well aware of the fact that the new reconstruction will not readily find favor with the majority of theologians but I am equally sure that it will strike a true note to most religious people.

A few implications of the effect of this revolutionary change upon Christian thought can be indicated by a few questions. If God is thought of in terms of Becoming what does this do to the various doctrines of *man?*. What happens to ideas of *sin?* How will it effect certain doctrines regarding the person of Jesus? Or the social community? In the light of such a concept how shall we think of the atonement? (Here we might suggest that since God changes most, He perhaps also suffers most).

Of great interest to many persons will be the question, what effect will the new theology have upon ideas of personal immortality? Is immortality the *memory of God* who treasures all values which have been created and achieved? Whitehead suggests this. In this act of remembrance such values would not lose their identity.

Such questions serve only to open fields of inquiry. This new way of thinking is so fresh that one may put his plow down

12. **Journal of Religion**, October, 1932.

almost anywhere and sink it into virgin soil. The new insights are challenging and constructive as well as corrective. It remains to make them increasingly fruitful in assisting understanding and fostering the growth of values.

In the historic days of the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, it seems to me that above all, what the early Christian "Fathers" were trying to do was to keep God and man together. For their day and generation and for many afterwards they succeeded remarkably well. It is my hope and prayer that we in our day, with our new insights and knowledge, may be as faithful and as successful to this end as were they.